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2-1938

Bulletin of the Rhode Island Library Association v.10, no. 2

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RILA, "Bulletin of the Rhode Island Library Association v.10, no. 2" (1938). *RILA Bulletin*. Book 8.
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BULLETIN

OF THE

RHODE ISLAND LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

VOL. 10

FEBRUARY, 1938

NO. 2

AN ACT

IN AMENDMENT OF AND IN ADDITION TO CHAPTER 65 OF THE GENERAL LAWS, ENTITLED "OF THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION", AS AMENDED.

SECTION 1. Sections 9 and 10 of chapter 65 of the general laws, entitled "Of the department of education", amended as to reorganization by section 21 of chapter 2250 of the public laws, 1935, are hereby further amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 9. The state librarian may cause to be paid annually, out of the annual appropriation made by the general assembly for state aid to free public libraries, an equal proportionate amount of said appropriation to and for the use of each free public library established and maintained in the state and eligible for state aid, to be expended in the purchase of books therefor.

"SEC. 10. The state librarian shall from time to time establish rules prescribing the character of the books which shall constitute such a library as will be entitled to the benefits conferred by the preceding section, regulating the management of such library so as to secure the free use of the same to the people of the town and neighborhood in which it shall be established, and directing the mode in which the sums paid in pursuance of Sections 9 and 10 of this chapter shall be expended. No library shall receive any benefit under the foregoing provisions, unless such rules shall have been complied with by those in charge thereof, nor until they shall have furnished to said state librarian satisfactory evidence of the number and char-

acter of the books contained in said library.

"For the purpose of rendering advice and assistance and for inspecting, in any necessary ways, the conditions and practices in free public libraries receiving state aid, the state librarian, with the approval of the secretary of state, shall appoint a person, qualified by reason of education, professional training in a library school and special experience, to serve under the direction of the state librarian as a field agent in carrying out the duties prescribed in this section. The general assembly shall annually appropriate a sum sufficient to pay the salary of such field agent and the necessary traveling expenses while in the pursuit of official duty; and the state budget director and comptroller is hereby authorized and directed to draw his orders upon the general treasurer for the payment of such sum, or so much thereof as may from time to time be required, upon the receipt by him of proper vouchers approved by the state librarian and the secretary of state."

SEC. 2. Section 13 of said chapter 65 of the general laws, as amended by chapter 592 of the public laws, 1925, is hereby further amended to read as follows:

"Sec. 13. The state librarian may cause to be paid annually to the free public libraries in the towns of the state, whose means are not sufficient to maintain proper library service, a sum of money

BULLETIN
of the
RHODE ISLAND LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

Published every now and then,
and designed to be of interest
to librarians of Rhode Island.

R. I. L. A. BULLETIN COMMITTEE

Mrs. Enid P. Hyde, Chairman
Westerly Public Library
Miss Mildred R. Bradbury
Providence Public Library
Miss Mary McIlwaine
Brown University Library

Vol. 10 FEBRUARY, 1938 No. 2

which shall be devoted to the salaries of the librarians in the said libraries; **provided, however,** that the provisions of this section shall not apply to towns having more than twenty-five thousand inhabitants; **provided, further, however,** that such state aid shall be granted in the discretion of the state librarian, with the approval of the secretary of state, to any public library serving a part of any town, having more than twenty-five thousand inhabitants, upon the receipt by said state librarian of an application for said state aid in the form of a petition signed by the trustees or board of directors or other governing body of said library, the president and secretary of the Rhode Island Library Association and twenty-five qualified residents of the community in which said library is located. Said money shall be apportioned to said libraries for said salaries by the state librarian, with the approval of the secretary of state, on a distribution basis to be determined by the state librarian with the approval of the secretary of state; **provided, however,** that the annual payment to any such library shall not exceed eight hundred dollars. The general assembly shall annually appropriate a sum sufficient to carry out the purpose of this section; and the state budget director and comptroller is hereby authorized and directed to draw his orders upon the general treasurer for the payment of such sum, or so much thereof as may from time to time be required, upon the receipt by him of proper vouchers approved by the state librarian and the secretary of state."

SEC. 3. For the purpose of carrying into effect the provisions of sections 9 and 10 of said chapter 65, as amended, for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1939, the sum of nine thousand five hundred dollars is hereby appropriated, out of any money in the treasury not otherwise appropriated, in addition to the amount already appropriated by the act, entitled, "An act making appropriations for the support of the state for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1939" passed—, six thousand dollars thereof to be expended in the purchase of books for said free public libraries, two thousand five hundred dollars for the payment of the salary of the field agent appointed thereunder and one thousand dollars for the traveling expenses of said field agent; and the state budget director and comptroller is hereby authorized and directed to draw his orders upon the general treasurer for the payment of such sum, or so much thereof as may from time to time be required, upon the receipt by him of proper vouchers approved by the state librarian and the secretary of state.

SEC. 4. For the purpose of carrying into effect the provisions of section 13 of said chapter 65, as amended, for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1939, the sum of three thousand dollars is hereby appropriated out of any money in the treasury not otherwise appropriated in addition to the amount already appropriated by the act, entitled "An act making appropriations for the support of the state for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1939", passed—; and the state budget director and comptroller is hereby authorized and directed to draw his orders upon the general treasurer for the payment of such sum, or so much thereof as may from time to time be required, upon the receipt by him of proper vouchers approved by the state librarian and the secretary of state.

SEC. 5. This act shall take effect June 30, 1938, and thereupon all acts and parts of acts inconsistent herewith shall stand repealed.

The proposed bill on the foregoing page was drafted by the Committee on Relations with the State, Clarence E. Sherman, Chairman, Harriet M. Briggs, and William Davis Miller in consultation with Miss Grace M. Sherwood, State Librarian. It will be presented at the current session of the legislature by Senator Edward J. Fenelon of Westerly, R. I.

A number of influential friends of the Library Association in the State were besought to send statements which could be printed in this issue of the Bulletin, but as days of grace were few, only one response has been received in time to appear in this number. The others may be expected later, but for the moment, Mr. George M. Hull's prompt reply graces the page.

"I recently signed a petition memorializing the General Assembly to increase the amount of state aid for libraries.

I signed in full knowledge of the serious financial condition that the state is faced with.

In signing I reflected that the libraries must press for recognition of their needs or be hopelessly handicapped and I realize our public libraries are essential to the public welfare.

They constitute an unfailing source of education and inspiration to the people.

They supply the scholar, the student and all who may read with an inexhaustible treasure of history, science and story.

The establishment and development of our libraries has been going forward steadily for generations and they have been sustained and supported by the people of Rhode Island with unfailing devotion.

Financial aid is extended by local and state appropriation and by individual gift and endowment. Local library associations work and earn money to help the cause and all people appreciate and advocate the library as a vital community service.

Municipal and individual financial support has in general increased with the years as the libraries increased and expanded their usefulness.

State aid has lagged, however, and is not commensurate with what the other sponsors are doing and is not what it should be.

The State must be reminded of its duty toward our libraries. It must be accurately informed of their financial needs. It should, and if intelligently approached I believe will, revise the present standard of aid and increase its appropriation to compare with present day library requirements."

Yours very truly,

GEORGE M. HULL.

East Providence, R. I.

RESOLUTION

Libraries are essential in a democracy, dependent as that is on enlightenment of the people and on the vitality of their cultural and social ideas. Modern trends in adult education and the use of many books in school and university, make libraries basic in the whole educational system. The library system of Rhode Island is inadequate due to lack of funds.

The state government has long accepted responsibility for aiding educational institutions, and the function of developing library service throughout the State has been committed to the Department of State under the Administrative Code of 1935.

We hold that the present State Aid to Libraries is totally inadequate, and that if library service is to be maintained in the smaller towns and villages of the State, increased support must be given to the library movement by the State.

We therefore, endorse the movement for increased appropriation and more adequate library support as initiated by the Rhode Island Library Association, and pledge our active interest and influence in seeking additional State Aid for Public Libraries.

The above resolution has been endorsed by the State Congress of Parents and Teachers, and the Federation of Women's Clubs. Librarians throughout the State have presented the resolution to various individuals, groups and clubs. That it has been heartily and enthusiastically supported is proved by the number of signatures received.

"American citizens have not, as yet, appropriated for books as much as they spend on greeting cards, chewing gum, movies, radio or soft drinks. As a consequence the libraries of the country work under the handicap of serious book shortages and inadequate personnel. Children's books, in particular, are used so constantly that they actually fall apart in service".

STATE AID IN RHODE ISLAND

Librarians have long been known as timid souls. Perhaps as individuals this characterization is quite undeserved, but as a group librarians have never been very self-assertive. For years the Rhode Island Library Association has had a dream of more adequate library service throughout the State, and our Committee on Relations with the State has in many instances paved the way towards that end. But in November, 1936, when we met at the State Library, Mr. Capelli, in a cordial address of welcome, issued a challenge which has pulled us out from behind our book stacks. He said in so many words—though this is not an exact quotation, "If you know what you want, why don't you ask for it". Today we **are** asking for it—and we are asking all persons in Rhode Island interested in the welfare of the library movement to help us get it.

What then is our goal? Our first aim is to see that every individual has fairly ready access to books, and our second, so to build as to raise the standard for reading. Moreover, we are asking for nothing new—just a little more of what we already have. More than sixty-two years ago, the State Government of Rhode Island, recognizing the fact that an enlightened citizenry is necessary for the preservation of democracy, accepted the responsibility for aiding free public libraries. Today, more turbulent times and a more complex civilization are steadily increasing the necessity for more adequate book distribution and public library service.

Has State Aid ever really accomplished anything? Let us look at a bit of Rhode Island library history and see what has been accomplished. In

1875, the first Statute providing state support for free libraries was enacted. Of more than sixty libraries established earlier than 1870 barely twelve were in existence at that time, but by contrast with the losses before 1870, in 1895 the seven free public libraries which shared in the first apportionment of money from the general treasury continued to serve the people, and of the thirty-eight free public libraries approved by the Board in twenty years from 1875 to 1895, only one failed to continue.

The combined resources of the seven libraries which qualified for support in 1875 was 9350 volumes. In the 10th year of state promotion thirty-three free public libraries were operating under State Board approval, and the collections of their books amounted to 113,000 volumes.

In 1895 after twenty years of state promotion and support Rhode Island had forty-five free public libraries, and five years later had achieved a system of fifty. Today sixty-nine public libraries in Rhode Island receive aid from the State.

Just what do we mean by State Aid in Rhode Island? Chapter 65, Sec. 9 of the General Laws records the enactment of a bill whereby there should be paid annually to each free public library approved by the Board of Education a sum to be expended in the purchase of books; this sum not exceeding \$50 for the first 500 volumes, \$25 for each additional 500 volumes, and provided further that annual payment to any one library should not exceed \$500. Such a plan soon proved too generous for the public exchequer, hence in 1925 the law was revised so that the sum of \$11,000 was annually appropriated to the public libraries for the purchase of books. It was further enacted at that time, that \$3000 be annually appropriated, this sum of money to be devoted to salaries of librarians of free public libraries whose means are not sufficient to maintain proper library service; this money to be apportioned only to those libraries whose librarians are paid salaries not exceeding \$500 annually and further provided that annual payment to any such library should not exceed \$400.

Beginning in 1908 two other library services were established, those of library visitor and that of travelling libraries. The travelling library service is intended to reach communities not served conveniently by free public libraries and was a happy forerunner of the modern book automobile used so largely today in many states for direct service to rural communities and isolated homes. To provide for the visitation or examination of free public libraries and the management of travelling libraries the sum of \$3000 annually was to be appropriated according to Section 11 of Chapter 65 of the Public Laws.

In the 1935 reorganization of the State Government the State Library was set up in the Dept. of State and these acts relating to free public libraries were duly amended under Chapter 2250 of the State laws to conform to the new set up. The authority for administering these acts was removed from the Board of Education and assigned to the State Librarian, an appointee of the Secretary of State.

Thus State Aid at the present time includes \$11,000 for books, \$3,000 for salaries and \$3,000 for travelling libraries and visitation and examination of libraries. The additional aid we are seeking includes \$6,000 for books, \$3,000 for salaries and \$3,500 for salary and expenses of a trained field agent.

Let us look at our State for a moment. There are three townships without a public library qualifying for State Aid, eleven others where the total number of volumes available for loan is less than the three books per capita recommended as standard by the American Library Association. Most of the libraries in the State are operating on reduced budgets and some are performing services far in excess of their normal activities. But of all of our needs there is none more immediate and vital than our need for an able professional field agent. We are fortunate in having Miss Sherwood as our State Librarian. Her hands need to be strengthened and her arms lengthened through the service of a trained field agent with travel funds sufficient to make possible

advisory service in the field and an accurate report within the office of the needs of every community.

SALLIE E. COY, President
Rhode Island Library Ass'n.

NEWS ITEMS

In the new edition of the "World Almanac" there are statistics of interest to librarians all over the United States, but especially to Rhode Islanders. In the item—tabulation of the largest libraries in the U. S. giving circulation per capita and total expenditures, the high records for circulation per capita go first to the Elmwood Public Library in Providence, second to Cleveland Public Library, and then to Pacific Coast libraries.

An interesting article on Green Hall, the new library building at Rhode Island State College, by Mr. F. P. Allen, the librarian, appeared in the Library Journal dated October 15, 1937, at approximately the time that the R. I. Library Association was entertained at Kingston at the fall meeting. The article includes an attractive photograph of the new building, also a floor plan, which shows the layout of the second floor.

Mr. Clarence E. Sherman, Librarian of the Providence Public Library, took part in the program of the Massachusetts Library Association Midwinter meeting at Cambridge, and during the panel discussion under the leadership of Mr. Kirtley F. Mather, spoke on public libraries, at the evening session in New Lecture Hall.

The Stillwater, R. I. Parent-Teacher Association has voted to back a new library for Stillwater, R. I. where the Lister Worsted Company is located. The news of the new library project in the small but progressive community is received with enthusiasm.

Michigan is the leading state in increased state aid for public libraries with a budget of \$500,000. Ohio is second with an appropriation of \$150,000 with Arkansas closely following with \$100,000. Vermont has voted \$25,000, and seven other states have made substantial increases.

IN MEMORIAM

Dr. Harry Lyman Koopman

The Rhode Island Library Association as well as the State of Rhode Island has lost a valued friend, author and librarian in the death of Dr. Koopman last December. He was born in Maine, educated at Colby College from which he received three degrees, the A. B., A. M., and Litt. D. and also had the A. M. degree conferred by Harvard. In 1893, he became librarian at Brown University, which post he served with vigor and distinction for 37 years. During this period he was elected president of the Massachusetts Library Club, and later of the Rhode Island Library Association. In 1928 he was named for a three year term as head of the American Library Institute. From his college days he was a prolific writer, and contributed to library literature "Historical Catalogue of Brown University", "Handbook of the Library of Brown University", and "The Librarian and the Desert". He was actively interested in library work in general as well as in the University Library, and alive to the problems confronting librarians in large and small libraries throughout the State.

No more beautiful tribute to Dr. Koopman could be quoted than the one which appeared in the February 1st Library Journal written by Edith R. Blanchard, Reference Librarian at the John Hay Library, who has worked with him for a number of years. In part, she says, "To us of the John Hay Library staff, even the unstinted measure of appreciation which has been accorded him leaves something yet unspoken. All these people knew him well, but none of them knew him in just the way that we did. It is hard to express clearly just how we thought of him. It does not compass our meaning to say that we regarded him as a wise and generous superior, as an understanding, friendly comrade in our work, as a seemingly inexhaustible source of knowledge in fields so varied that the years never staled our wonder that the learning he wore so lightly could be so profound.

Though he left us seven years ago, because he had reached the age of retirement, none sensed better than we that his eager, questing spirit could never be halted by the milestones of a career. And still he held himself ready to serve us, to solve problems with which his long association with the library made him uniquely competent to deal. He still came back from time to time to draw on the storehouse for whose diversity he himself had largely provided. For those who worked with him here he will always come back. He is to us as essentially a part of this great Library as its crowded stacks, its rare collections, its busy workrooms. A book, a phrase, a question will not so much summon him again as make us aware that he is here . . . A fire in a room, even when its bright light passes, leaves its beneficence of warmth to cheer all who enter that place. But to have held one's hands to that glowing flame, that is to be more fortunate".

The school and the library are the two legs upon which the body politic stands. If either leg is weak the body politic must wobble as it walks. Both institutions are maintained by public funds to develop more competent citizenship. One exists to start education; the other to continue it. The free school came first. The free library follows as inevitably in a democratic country as freedom of thought itself. —Joy Elmer Morgan, editor, Journal of the N. E. A.

Overheard at the Desk

First librarian: "Gone with the wind" is still one of the most popular books after all this time.

Second librarian: That's odd, too, in Rhode Island where we have our own scarlet O'Hara.

Nonplussed librarian: "That man has just paid a fine of thirty-seven cents on this overdue book."

"What book?"

"The art of rapid reading".